

Scripture Reflection

A Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew (Mt 16:13-16)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ What is my core identity?

Who am I? Any identity I give to myself depends fundamentally on who Jesus is to me. Who Jesus is to me will determine who I truly am. If Jesus is truly my Lord, God and Saviour, then my life will reflect His life and my life mission reflects His Mission. My life and life choices are no longer mine but His alone. Accordingly, I stake my life for Him. I live an extraordinary life on this earth: I live in this world but am not of this world. Any identity I give to myself that is not rooted in this truth will give me false thinking, trivial lifestyle, an unholy life. How much of Jesus do I reflect in my life to others? Am I still living very much a life dictated by my own desires, my wishes, my aspirations? Does my personal, little world revolve not around Jesus but myself? Do I need deliverance from myself to live a truly Christian life? Can people tell that I am a follower of Christ by the way I live my life? Do I take my Christian calling and identity for granted?

The Damascus Experience. For those with open hearts, an encounter with the Lord always produces lasting transformation. A good example is the conversion of St. Paul. Paul thought he was doing the right thing when he went about zealously persecuting the early Christians. He thought he was blameless in the sight of the Lord. After he was converted, Paul considered all the previous things he stood for as rubbish. Paul never took his calling and identity lightly. With those who cast doubt on Paul's calling, citing he had not met Jesus personally, Paul reacted strongly because he felt his very foundation was being threatened. Like a bulldog, Paul tenaciously held fast to his identity of being Christ's apostle ("sent not from men nor by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.." cf Galatians 1:1), and never failed to assert this identity in Christ at the beginning of his letters to the faith communities he had founded.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God... (cf 1 Peter 2:9). God called me out of my darkness into His wonderful light. He called me by name. I am one of His chosen ones. I share the royal priesthood of Jesus. I am set apart to belong only to God. How much of the way I think reflects this truth? How much does the way I live reflect this truth? Are my sights set on things of this earth rather than on the things of heaven, my true home? Do I live my life in consecration to God? Is God my all in all?

Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening (cf 1 Samuel 3:10). Am I tuned in to God's calling for me? Young Prophet Samuel was unused to hearing the voice of God. When God called, he heard but he did not know it was God. But he persisted, kept on listening carefully and kept himself awake. At the end he was rewarded and he responded to God with "Speak Lord, Your servant is listening." With that, the young boy was on his way to become the prophet of God for His people. *The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of His words fall to the ground* (cf 1 Samuel 3:19). Do I have the obedience and meekness of young Samuel, letting none of His Words fall from me?

By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35). The commandment is Jesus is clear and everyone can easily understand it. It is to love God above everything, and to love everyone including ourselves for the sake of God. We are to see the person of Christ in everyone. By the action of the Holy Spirit, God's pure love is poured into our hearts if they are open to accept God's graces. In living Christ's command through a life motivated by love of God, we live the life of Christ on earth, we live His mission, and open ourselves to the indestructible hope that we have in Christ – the glory that He will share with us in our true home which awaits us.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are my Friend, my Lord, my God, my All. Thank You for all You are to me. Your calling gives purpose to my life, it is my life mission. This world has so many irresistible passing attractions, and I am full of weaknesses. Oftentimes I am distracted, and hence, not able to live a full Christian life, worthy of Your calling. Please forgive all my weaknesses and failings. Renew me in heart, mind and spirit by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Recall to me all my hidden faults so that I can correct myself and ask for Your forgiveness. Cast away from me anything which opposes holy love and holy truth. Give me the obedience and zeal of young Samuel and St Paul in answering Your calling to be a true disciple of Yours, a true child of God the Most High. Remind me always this is my precious calling, my highest mission. Take my heart and reclaim it for Your very own. Mary, Protectress of Our Faith and Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.and he let none of His words fall to the ground (1 Samuel 3:19)